

# Peninsula Reviews



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Perlman-Schmidt-Bailey Trio  
Mozart Society of California

## Perlman-Schmidt-Bailey Trio Charms Us

by Lyn Bronson

The Mozart Society of California opened its season last night with an exciting performance by the Perlman-Schmidt-Bailey Trio, a trio consisting of pianist Navah Perlman, violinist Giora Schmidt and cellist Zuill Bailey. Each of these three young musicians has a distinctive sound, and yet they demonstrated in this concert that they melded together effectively to create cohesive and lovely ensemble music.

There are music snobs who tend to sniff haughtily at chamber music which includes the presence of the piano and insist that it is the string quartet genre that appeals to the true connoisseur — although the former violist of the Kolisch String Quartet loved his little joke that the definition of a string quartet is “four musicians on stage having a wonderful time while the audience is bored out of their minds.” In any case, it has been our experience that audiences respond enthusiastically to piano trios and piano quartets, and so it was last night as a small, but highly appreciative audience, greeted the musicians as they strolled on stage.

Although pianist Navah Perlman appeared on the stage of Sunset Center Theater in a solo piano recital for the Keyboard Artist Series approximately 19 years ago, she wears her years so lightly that she appears not a day older. Except for the opening work on the program, Antonio Lotti's Trio Sonata in G Major, where she was playing a continuo part, Ms. Perlman was extremely busy during this concert, since the other two works on the program, the Brahms Piano Trio in B Major and Beethoven's “Archduke” Trio are demanding indeed for the pianist. She is a fine musician with natural technical facility and highly refined musicianship. Never a show off, Ms. Perlman was the consummate ensemble player, ready to yield to her partners when necessary, but also ready to step forward and whip up a storm of excitement when called for.

Violinist Giora Schmidt, an astonishingly mature artist for the age of 21, played with a sweet, warm tone, and demonstrated fine ensemble skills. Cellist Bailey blew us away with his rich, vibrant tone and his fabulous control of dynamics as he shaped the most exquisite phrases.

The Lotti Trio Sonata that opened the program was probably unfamiliar to most members of the audience (it certainly was to me), for Lotti is rarely heard in programs today, and it is his *Crucifixus* that has best withstood the test of time. However, this Trio Sonata was an interesting work full of surprising details that received on this occasion a smooth and pleasing performance.

Cellist Bailey announced from the stage that they were going to depart from the order of the printed program and perform the Brahms after the Lotti, and then after intermission end the program with the “Archduke” Trio. Initially this seemed a peculiar choice, but what actually happened is that after a rich and satisfying performance of the Brahms Trio, it was the Beethoven “Archduke” Trio that was the standout performance of the evening.

This performance made a powerful effect, for although it is a familiar work, it sounded amazingly fresh on this occasion. All three musicians were thoroughly warmed up and played with a spontaneity and excitement that was immensely appealing. There was a great deal of fine repartee between Schmidt and Bailey while Perlman rippled away with beautifully articulated passages that were both charming and exciting. This was a performance I would have liked to hear over and over.

As is its custom, the Mozart Society provided a lovely reception for the artists after the concert, and this gave us an opportunity to meet with them and discover that they are as charming and unaffected offstage as they are in performance.

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